

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 06562 221610Z

47

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3179

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6562

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, IS

SUBJECT: STORM OVER ALLON ARTICLE

REF: TEL AVIV 6492

1. AMIDST THE CONTROVERSY EVOKED BY PUBLICATION OF FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON'S ARTICLE IN THE QUARTERLY FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE KNESSET MET IN SPECIAL SESSION SEPTEMBER 21, ON THE INITIATIVE OF THE LIKUD, TO CONSIDER "ALLON'S NEW RETREAT MAP". MENAHEM BEGIN, LEADER OF THE LIKUD, ACCUSED ALLON OF MISUSE OF MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CALLED FOR HIS RESIGNATION. HE CONCENTRATED HIS ATTACK ON THE ARTICLE'S TERRITORIAL CONCEPTS AND DENOUNCED ALLON'S READINESS TO YIELD GAZA AND ITS ENVIRONS TO A JORDAN-PALESTINE STATE. BEGIN DECLARED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY, AS STATED TO THE KNESSET, CONSIDERS THE GAZA STRIP AN INTEGRAL PART OF ISRAEL.

2. REPLYING FOR THE GOVERNMENT, MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO ISRAEL GALILI SAID THAT ALLON'S ARTICLE REPRESENTED HIS PRIVATE VIEWS AND THAT IT WAS A STATEMENT OF THE
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 06562 221610Z

IMPORTANCE TO ISRAEL OF DEFENSIBLE BORDERS. HE ADDED

THAT "...OUR POLICY FOR A PEACE SETTLEMENT IS BASED ON READINESS TO MAKE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS. THE LAST ELECTIONS SHOWED WE HAD A MANDATE FOR THAT POSITION FROM THE MAJORITY OF VOTERS. AND, LET ME REMIND YOU, WE PLEDGED THAT IF AND WHEN THE TIME FOR SIGNING A PEACE AGREEMENT COMES, WE SHALL GO TO THE PEOPLE FOR A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE BEFORE WE YIELD TERRITORY IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA."

3. BY A LOPSIDED MAJORITY, WITH MOST OF THE GOVERNMENT MKS JOINING THE LIKUD, THE KNESSET VOTED TO REFER THE MOTION TO COMMITTEE. PRIOR TO THE CONVENING OF THE SESSION THERE WERE ATTEMPTS TO UNITE THE GOVERNMENT COALITION PARTIES BEHIND A MOVE TO DISMISS THE LIKUD MOTION; THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN AN UNEQUIVOCAL DEFENSE OF ALLON. HOWEVER, THE NRP, UNHAPPY AS THE LIKUD WITH ALLON'S "MAP", LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THIS STRATEGY WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO IT AND THAT IT WOULD DESERT THE GOVERNMENT AND VOTE WITH THE LIKUD FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE. UNABLE TO MUSTER SUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR DISMISSAL, BECAUSE OF DEFECTIONS AMONG LABOR PARTY MKS AS WELL, THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO VOTE FOR REFERRAL. THIS MEANS THAT ALLON WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO ANSWER TO THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ARTICLE. IN THE END SEVEN LABOR PARTY MKS JOINED THE MAPAM IN VOTING AGAINST REFERRAL.

4. COMMENT: THE ARTICLE AND THE TIMING OF ITS PUBLICATION APPEAR TO HAVE BECOME A MILD EMBARRASSMENT TO THE GOVERNMENT AND HIGHLIGHT THE PROBLEMS WITHIN THE RULING LABOR ALIGNMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT RABIN-- ALTHOUGH HE WAS PRESENT -- DID NOT ADDRESS THE KNESSET FOR THE GOVERNMENT BUT INSTEAD SENT ALLON'S AHDUT AVODAH COLLEAGUE ISRAEL GALILI TO THE ROSTRUM. PROBABLY ONE CONSIDERATION BEHIND RABIN'S SILENCE WAS THE IMPLIED OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT HIS DEFENSE OF ALLON WOULD HAVE GIVEN THE ARTICLE.

5. ALLON COULD NOT HAVE BEEN INSENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT HIS BYLINE WOULD GIVE THE ARTICLE THE APPEARANCE OF AN OFFICIAL POLICY STATEMENT. OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 06562 221610Z

BEYOND DEMONSTRATING TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD ISRAEL'S FLEXIBILITY, ALLON WANTED TO KEEP HIS NAME BEFORE THE PUBLIC AND STAKE OUT A POSITION AS SPOKESMAN FOR THE DOVES IN THE LABOR ALIGNMENT.

6. THE DIRECTOR OF NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS IN THE MFA (RAVIV) TOLD US THE MINISTRY PLAYED NO PART IN THE PREPARATION OF THE ARTICLE AND THAT IT WAS ALLON'S PERSONAL

ATTEMPT TO DEFINE THE CONCEPT OF DEFENSIBLE BORDERS. HE
ALSO SAID THE TIMING HAD BEEN ENTIRELY THE DECISION OF
THE QUARTERLY.
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